

VOLUNTEERING



WHAT IS VOLUNTEERING?

Volunteering is when an individual works for an organisation free of charge; that is there is no payment provided for their services.

WHY VOLUNTEER?

- Volunteering is a good way to develop skills that employers are looking for. If you don't have any work experience, volunteering for a month or two over summer could help you to secure a paid position.
- Are you interested in human rights or working with animals? Why not seek out a volunteer position with a human rights organisation or at an animal shelter? Volunteering while you're studying could set you apart from your competitors. Use volunteering to explore personal interests or gain valuable experience in the professional field you wish to work in after university.
- Additionally, volunteering offers social and networking opportunities. You might meet people with a view on life similar to your own, or volunteering could open

up a connection to a larger organisation or network for you to engage in. Many students find volunteering very rewarding and enjoy the opportunity to contribute to a cause they feel strongly about.

Do I need a resume and cover letter to apply for volunteer work?

Yes, you will need a resume and cover letter to apply for volunteer work. Applying for volunteer work, is much the same as applying for a job. If you need assistance with your resume or cover letter, please see the resources on the [SHOC Employment](#) page for more details.

Should I list volunteer work on my resume? How do I get supporting documentation?

Yes, volunteer experience is considered legitimate experience when applying for a job. You will want to treat this like any other experience, listing the duration, company and role responsibilities. It can demonstrate to an employer that you are proactive in developing your skills and gaining experience.

HOW DO I FIND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES?

The easiest way is to look online, using specific websites that support people looking to volunteer. Many websites will match you to a volunteer position based on areas of interests, previous skills and experience. You could apply to an organisation that mainly takes volunteers; like the RSPCA or Oxfam. Many charities or non-for profit organisations will also take on volunteers, so check with them directly or on their websites for more information.

You can enquire directly with businesses about volunteer opportunities, however they may not be able to help you because of insurance reasons. If you are not a paid employee or customer, you will not be covered by insurance in the case of an accident.

Remember to consider your volunteer goals. Think about the skills and tasks you would like to gain experience in and avoid agreeing to any volunteer work that doesn't fit your skill set or provide you with the opportunities that could later help you secure paid employment.

VOLUNTEER SPECIFIC WEBSITES

Below are some links to volunteer opportunities within Queensland.

Volunteering Queensland

volunteeringqld.org.au/web

Seek Volunteer

volunteer.com.au

Go Volunteer

govolunteer.com.au

Conservation Volunteers Australia

conservationvolunteers.com.au

The Queensland government provides a list of volunteering programs available within Queensland.

qld.gov.au/community/community-organisations-volunteering/volunteering

CHARITIES AND NON-FOR PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

The Charity Guide: Queensland Charities to Donate and Volunteer for

charity-charities.org/Australia-charities/Brisbane-QLD

A Guide to Giving: A non-for profit directory

probonoaustralia.com.au/directory

ON CAMPUS VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Clubs & Societies allows for both social engagement and volunteering with stalls and events

uqu.com.au/clubs-societies

UQ Student Leaders

uq.edu.au/student-services/student-leaders

CONSIDER THIS

Don't over commit –

Remember that you still need to fit in your studies, part-time/casual job, social life and other extracurricular activities that you do around your volunteer work. Volunteer positions are usually very flexible so work out how many hours you can afford to spend volunteering each week.

Align your volunteering goals with your career goals –

Volunteering is a great way to share your skills and gain new skills related to your studies. It will also improve employability when you graduate. Think about your career goals, skill set and the skills you would like to develop then seek an organisation that fits with these goals.

Consider volunteering as a virtual volunteer –

Some organisations now offer the

opportunity to complete volunteer work over the computer. This could be editing a newsletter, updating a website or keeping in contact with certain people via social media channels. This is a good option if you are restricted with time and ways of getting to and from places.

Remember to be flexible –

Things may not always turn out as expected and there may be unexpected challenges that come with volunteering, but it is important to remain calm and use your problem solving skills.

Do not expect to start at the top –

Many volunteer positions will be at the bottom of the ladder. You may just do cleaning, filing or stocktake work to begin with. Like any position, you will also need to work your way up to different duties and responsibilities while

volunteering.

Consider a long term plan –

Just like paid experience, it looks a lot more impressive on your resume if you have been volunteering for a long time with the same organisation. Additionally, the longer you volunteer at the same place, the more opportunities that will come your way through skill development, networking and even possible travel.



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